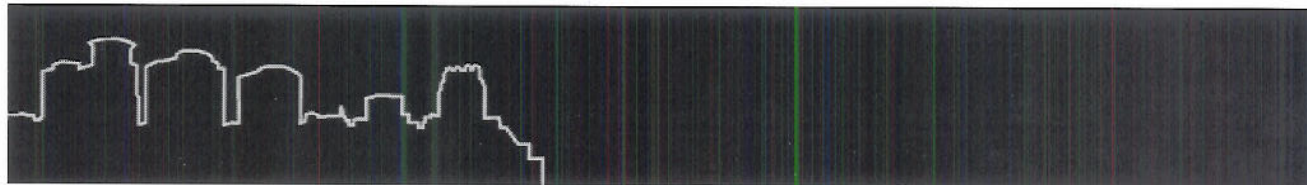


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Contract set for war-games systems

Richard Burnett and Chris Cobbs | Sentinel Staff Writers

Posted March 19, 2007

The Army's high-tech, war-game version of laser tag has generated some big dollars for Tec-Masters Inc. and Icon Systems Inc.

Tec-Masters recently won a four-year Army contract worth \$35 million to design and produce laser-based war-game systems for the Abrams Tank and the Bradley Fighting Vehicle. Icon will be a principal subcontractor.

The Combat Vehicle System contract was awarded by the Army Program Executive Office for Simulation, Training & Instrumentation, or PEO-STRI, which is based in Orlando's Central Florida Research Park.

The laser systems, including transmitters and detectors, enable Abrams and Bradley gunners to hone their skills in real-time war-game exercises.

Tec-Masters and Icon will produce the next generation of the equipment, which is part of the war-game program known as MILES, or Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System.

It was the latest in a series of big wins for Tec-Masters, a small contractor based in Huntsville, Ala., that also has offices in Central Florida Research Park.

Tec-Masters has received nearly \$200 million in training-technology contracts from PEO-STRI in recent years, according to Brian Domian, the company's top Orlando executive.

The latest Combat Vehicle System contract involves a major upgrade from the past because all the equipment will be wireless, he said.

Eliminating the electronic cables results in two main advances, according to Domian: First, with the wiring no longer in the way, the system improves accuracy and provides more realistic training.

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Secondly, it dramatically reduces replacement costs.

"One of the biggest logistics costs on these vehicles is that the cables frequently get damaged," Domian said. "The vehicles are often training in wooded areas, and the cables get caught on branches and are torn off. They have to spend a lot of time replacing them. The wireless system will mean significant savings."

Most of the work on the Combat Vehicle System will be done at Tec-Masters' Alabama facilities and Icon's operations in San Diego.

But Tec-Masters has other bids in the works that could result in an expansion of its small workforce in Orlando, Domian said.

The company has fewer than a half-dozen people employed locally. But the company has already leased more space than it currently uses in anticipation of winning more deals in the future, he said.

UCF computes

A team from the University of Central Florida finished 44th in the 2007 Association for Computing Machinery International Collegiate Programming Contest held recently in Tokyo.

UCF was one of 88 teams to reach the final round, making it through earlier rounds that started with 6,000 teams from 1,765 universities in 82 countries. The top five finishers were: Warsaw University (Poland); Tsinghua University (China); St. Petersburg University of IT, Mechanics and Optics (Russia); Massachusetts Institute of Technology; and Novosibirsk State University (Russia).

Women's group picks AT&T

The Women's Business Enterprise National Council, an advocate of women-owned businesses as suppliers to corporations, has chosen AT&T Inc. as one of the nation's top 10 corporations for women's business enterprises. "AT&T has raised the bar with respect to implementing and innovating best practices in purchasing from women's business enterprises," said Linda Denny, the national council's interim president.

Transitions

FDN Communications, a Maitland-based telecommunications carrier, has made Kevin Smith its new chief marketing officer and Jim DaBramo its executive vice president of strategic sales. Smith, formerly vice president of marketing, will oversee marketing and promotional efforts. DaBramo will develop strategies to grow the company's wholesale business unit.

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